

Anglo-Saxon and Norman England 1060-88

Key topic 1 - 1060-66 Anglo Saxon England and the Norman Conquest

Anglo-Saxon Society population was 2 million, low life expectancy because of infant mortality, almost everyone farmed

The King role was to protect his people from attack and make laws for safety at home. Created new laws and ensured they were enforced, controlled the production of silver pennies, owned large estates and granted land to loyal followers and took away land from those who had acted against him. Could raise an army and fleet and decided when taxes were needed. Edward was a respected law maker as he kept peace at home. He was also very pious which many believed would bring God's blessing to England and that God would direct his actions.

In return the duties of the people were to obey the law, no forging of coins, pay tax and fight in return for land, equip fighters. Every boy swore an oath of loyalty to the king when he became 12.

Limits to the King's power half the country was Anglo - Danish - descendants of Vikings - called the Danelaw, accepted Edward's rule but had more loyalty to their local rulers and customs. Edward also had to deal with the power of the Godwins (see later)

Earls - most important after the King - competed against each other to win favour of the King for rewards and honour, sometimes challenged the King to get more power. Controlled huge areas of land for the king - called Earldoms. Responsible for collecting taxes, kept a third of them which was supposed to be used to ensure the earldom was well defended and well run. Oversaw justice and punishments. Great military power - lords to hundreds of thegns and had an elite bodyguard of housecarls.

Thegns - local lords/aristocrats - 5000 - held 5 hides of land, lived in a manor house with a separate church, warrior class. When he became a thegn, he paid a tax which required him to equip himself with a helmet and coat of mail, a horse, sword and spear. Some got their land directly from the king, some from the earls.

Peasant farmers - biggest section of society, worked their own land and some work for their lord for the right to use their land. Ceorls were free to go and work for another lord if they wanted to

Slaves 10% - could be bought and sold, seen as property rather than people. Less harsh punishments for crimes as it might damage their ability to work.

Changing social status, a peasant who gained 5 hides of land could become a thegn, slaves could be freed, peasants could sell themselves into slavery if desperate, thegns could become earls, earls could be demoted and earls could sometimes become kings.

Anglo-Saxon Government

The Witan - made up of most important aristocrats - earls and archbishops. Would advise the King on threats from foreign powers, religious affairs and land disputes. Also had a role in approving the new king. The king did not have to listen to the advice and decided when the Witan should meet.

Earldoms (as above) - 5 in 1060 - helped the King rule the country - raised army, collected taxes and oversaw justice and punishments.

Local Government - earldoms were divided into **shires** (40) to make ruling more manageable - each shire had its own court for hearing cases and giving punishments, the shire reeve acted as the king's representative, had a burgh and provided troops for the fyrd. Shires were divided into hundreds (about 12 villages) had its own reeve and a court each month to deal with less serious crimes. Hundreds were divided into tithings - group of ten households.

Shire Reeves - (sheriffs/thegn) worked within the earldoms to look after the king's interests and to carry out his instructions - collected revenues from the king's land, the geld tax and fines from the shire court. He dealt with crime in the shire courts.

Military service when the king ordered, each group of five hides had to provide one man and equipment for the fyrd. Only stayed away for 40 days or farms would suffer.

The Legal system laws issued by the king to keep the peace. Harsh punishments eg cutting off an ear, nose or hand. No police or prisons.

Blood feuds - if a family member was attacked the rest of the family would hunt down the attacker and punish them - could go on for generations and cause problems in whole communities. Solution was the **wergild** - instead of taking revenge, the family was compensated by the murderer's family - eg a ceorls was 20s, a thegn 1,200s.

Collective responsibility - duty of all members of a tithing to respond to the 'hue and cry' and hunt for a criminal. The tithing was responsible for the ten households' behaviour - if someone did something wrong they had to pay a fine.

The economy - wool and cloth the most important product. Sheep in the west and crops in the drier more fertile soil of the east. 6000 mills ground flour. Could import silver from Germany - evidence of wealth. England exported wool, iron and cheese.

Towns 10% lived in towns. Each shire had its main burh (fortified town), planned so no one was more than 20 miles from safety if Vikings raided. Linked by roads for quick troop movement. Burhs were also trading hubs - leather, textiles, food and pottery - law said all trade above a set amount had to take place there so that tax could be paid. London and York about 10 000 population.

Villages large number of scattered houses. Houses made of wood and thatched with straw, relatives lived together rather than just one family. Thegns had manor houses - often with own church that provided services for the local area - brought people together in a village.

Influence of the Church organised into large areas, each controlled by a bishop - often rich and important who also served on the Witan. Sometimes tensions with thegns as bishops didn't want anyone else hiring and firing priests.

Local priests not generally well educated, many could not read Latin. They had some land like the peasants and were often married - went against the teachings of the Church. Influence on everyday life was very strong - everyone believed they would spend time being punished for their sins in the afterlife so were religious and prayed a lot to reduce this time. King Edward was very religious and rebuilt Westminster Abbey.

Last Years of Edward and the Succession Crisis

The House of Godwin - by 1060s controlled most of England. The King was married to Harold Godwinson's sister, Harold inherited his father's title as Earl of Wessex in 1053, his brother Tostig was Earl of Northumbria, his brother Gyrth was the Earl of East Anglia. Their huge lands made them extremely rich and they were lords to many hundreds of thegns, making them powerful war leaders.

Edward realised they had huge power and tried to reduce it by appointing Normans to influential positions. Normans insist that Edward promised William the throne in return for his support against the Godwins. 1051 Godwin returned to power and his sons were given powerful positions

Harold's Embassy to Normandy 1064 - different versions of the event.

Norman version - a mission for the king to confirm the promise of the Crown to William. Boat was blown off course and ended up in Ponthieu where he was kept prisoner. William demanded his release which meant Harold was in his debt.

Harold fought for William and was rewarded with chain mail armour and helmet. Harold then swore an oath on saint's bones renewing the promise of the English throne and promised to help William become king on Edward's death. Could then say Harold was an evil oath breaker when he crowned himself king.

English version Harold may or may not have visited Normandy - if he did it was to get the release of family members taken hostage by William.

The Rising against Earl Tostig (Harold's brother) 1065 Tostig was unpopular as Earl of Northumbria as he was seen as an outsider in the Danelaw, he didn't defend it against Scottish attacks, imposed new laws from the south, ordered the assassination of Northumbrian rivals while they were his guests and taxed more than the Danelaw was used to.

Rebels marched on York and killed lots of Tostig's housecarls and thegns and declared Tostig an outlaw. They invited Morcar to be their Earl instead. Tostig might expect support from Edward and his own brother Harold, but no Edward ordered that an army be raised to fight the rebels - Harold and other earls made excuses and his command was not obeyed. Harold went north to deliver the King's message that Tostig had pushed the Northumbrians too far and Edward was replacing him with Morcar. Harold then married Morcar's sister to cement their friendship. Tostig was furious, especially with his brother and went into exile... to return in 1066. Harold probably betrayed his brother as now Edward was old and sick he saw Tostig as a rival to the throne.

Death of Edward January 1066 - without children which led to a succession crisis. Harold said William gave him the throne on his deathbed - others said they had a better claim

Rival Claimants for the throne

Harold Godwinson - said Edward gave him the throne on his deathbed, was the King's brother in law, had been the king's most important adviser, proven military strength, experience of ruling as Earl of Wessex and influence over and support of earls and thegns.

Edgar Aethling nephew of Edward - Aethling means prince of royal blood. Born around 1051 was seen as too young to rule, especially at a time when there was military threat from Scandinavia and Normandy.

Harold Hardraada - 'strict ruler' feared throughout Europe. Felt he had a claim through his ancestor King Cnut and wanted more land. Tostig probably convinced him that Harold was unpopular in England so that he had a chance to gain the throne. As a Viking, he would be welcomed in the Danelaw.

William of Normandy claimed that Edward promised him the throne in 1051 and Harold G confirmed it on his Embassy in 1064. Got the backing of the Pope because of Harold's oath - made his men feel they had God on their side.

Events of 1066

Harold was crowned King the day after Edward's death with the Witan's support. William was furious. Harold immediately went north to ensure Morcar's loyalty. Tostig was wandering round Europe looking for allies against Harold. Harold's army and fleet guarded the south coast expecting a Norman invasion. September - army was sent home to collect in the harvest.

Battle of Gate Fulford 20th September - Hardraada arrived with 300 warships with 10 000 soldiers. Marched to York. Their way was blocked by Morcar (Earl of Northumbria) and his brother Edwin (Earl of Mercia) and 6000 troops. Harold H's tactic defeated E and M - he positioned Tostig's weaker

troops across a ford facing E and M. As the ford went out with the tide, English troops rushed at Tostig's and Hardraada's battle-hardened troops attacked them from the side. E and M's soldiers had nowhere to escape as marshland was behind them. Hardraada's soldiers boasted that there were so many English dead in the marsh that they could walk across the marsh without getting muddy boots.

Battle of Stamford Bridge - 25th September Godwinson marched north, 185 miles in 5 days, leaving the south coast undefended. Hardraada and Tostig were informed that hostages would be handed to them at Stamford Bridge..... so on **25th September** they were there waiting but quite undefended - a lot of the armour and perhaps a third of their army was on the ships as they did not expect Godwinson to arrive so quickly. After killing the berserker on the bridge, the battle was a complete success, Tostig and Hardraada were killed and only 24 ships returned to Norway.

1st October Godwinson heard that William had arrived in Hastings. Harold immediately marched south with an exhausted army, weakened by deaths and injuries.

The Battle of Hastings 14th October

Reasons for William's victory

William's leadership strong to keep the army and fleet together across the channel. Waited for the fyrd to be disbanded before he crossed the channel. Well organised as needed a lot of supplies when gathering in Normandy. Marched his troops several miles along the coast to Hastings and adapted the iron age fort there into a defensible 'flat pack' castle - all the sections had been made in Normandy. Allowed his men to destroy the surrounding area and take food, drink and horses from the English to increase his supplies. Did not achieve surprise as Norman scouts saw him coming. Pope supported him - made the Normans feel they had God on their side.

Harold's leadership - although he was a respected leader, he has been criticised for some of his decisions in 1066. He called his southern army out in May and then had to maintain it for four months until it was disbanded in September to collect in the harvest, leaving the south undefended. Perhaps he should have stopped in London on his way down rather than marching straight to Hastings - this could have meant he would have had more men and if he waited for William to attack him, he might have fought him off.

Norman troops - Knights 800 had specially trained horses, saddles kept them in place so they could move arms/weapons, chain mail armour, kite shaped shield and height advantage in charging. **Footsoldiers** 4-6000 archers had padded jackets as armour, other soldiers had chainmail armour shields and javelins or swords.

English troops 6-7000 - Housecarls- javelin, long axe, sword - trained to wield axes strong enough to decapitate a horse. Round shields, formed shield wall.

Fyrd ordinary soldiers picked up on the march south - not all turned up in time, Harold decided to take on William anyway. Thegns had good weapons, shields and armour but general fyrd had farming tools.

Tactics - the English formed a shield wall. Norman archers and cavalry could not break it. Feigned retreat broke the shield wall as the English ran down the hill. Harold was killed.

Luck- Hardrada's invasion also helped William as Harold's troops were weakened.

Key Topic 2: William I in power securing the kingdom 1066-1087

The submission of the earls - William expected the Anglo-Saxon earls to come to Hastings to surrender to him. Instead they fled back to London and declared Edgar King. William sent troops to seize the royal treasury which meant the English had nothing to reward their troops. William decided to march to London burning homes and farms on the way to intimidate the Anglo-Saxons into surrender. Instead of attacking the fortified city immediately he went west to Berkhamstead. There he was met by Edgar, Edwin, Morcar and other leading men who submitted to him, swore oaths to obey him and offered him the crown.

Coronation - William swore an oath he would rule England as the best Anglo-Saxon kings had if the English were loyal to him.

Rewarding followers Anglo - Saxons - Edwin and Morcar kept their earldoms, Edwin was to marry William's daughter - would have made him very powerful.

Norman followers had been promised land for fighting for him - William declared he owned all the land in England and he could grant it to those who had supported him. All land of those who had fought against him was taken away - William kept about 20%.

Mercenaries needed paying - William set a geld tax

The Pope's support was rewarded with rich gifts from the treasury.

Controlling the borderlands - the Marcher (Anglo-Saxon for border) Earls to secure the border with Wales. New Earldoms of Shrewsbury, Chester and Hereford. Earls were chosen because of their loyalty eg Roger de Montgomery Earl of Shrewsbury had governed Normandy while William invaded England. Marcher earls had a lot more independence as they were so far from the King. Earldoms were smaller than shires so easier to control and made sure the earls did not become too powerful. Rights to set up towns and markets attracted Normans to settle and colonise the borders. Sheriffs were the earls' men which meant they could respond quickly to unrest without having to contact the king. Earls could build castles. Earls did not pay tax as a reward for their loyalty.

Castles 500 built at strategic locations such as river crossing, used as a base for the local lord, to dominate territory that had rebelled against them eg York and as a symbol of Norman power, a constant reminder to the English that the Normans had won. Motte and bailey - clever design with a high motte to prevent attack, the keep provided a good lookout point, the bailey was used for stables and living quarters for soldiers, a ditch and drawbridge added extra defence.

Anglo-Saxon Resistance

The revolt of Edwin and Morcar 1068 - Edwin and Morcar had been kept with William since the battle but fled north in 1068. **Causes:**

- Edwin was angry because William changed his mind about marriage to his daughter and his earldom was smaller.
- Morcar's earldom was also smaller which meant loss of power and money.
- Anglo - Saxons were angry that while William was in Normandy, his regents Odo of Bayeux and FitzOsbern seized land and allowed their soldiers to rape women
- Anglo-Saxons resented their loss of land, high taxes and castles

Key events - William marched north building castles at Warwick and Nottingham. Edwin and Morcar surrendered and Edgar fled to Scotland probably because of William's enormous show of strength. Edwin and Morcar were pardoned but became 'guests' at William's court so he could supervise them.

Edgar Aethling and the rebellions in the north 1069

Causes Resentment of Norman rule. William chose Cumin as a new Earl of Northumbria. Cumin attacked and looted towns and villages. Cumin was killed in Durham. Another uprising in York - the governor and many Norman troops were killed.

Key events Edgar came down from Scotland, launched an attack on the garrison at York. William arrived very quickly, crushed the rebellion and Edgar fled to Scotland. A new castle was built and William felt secure enough to go to Winchester for Easter, leaving FitzOsbern in charge.

Summer 1069 - Danish troops arrived and met up with Edgar's troops. A threat to William as the Danes had allies in the Danelaw. The rebels attacked York, Normans had to leave the castle as an accident set fire to it and 3 000 were killed. The rebels scattered. The Danes took their plunder to their ships and sailed south to Lincolnshire

William's solution paid the Danes to leave and carried out the Harrying the North 1069-70- to destroy the rebels, to stop them being strong enough to rebel in the future and to make the area unattractive to Danish invasion. Crops and houses were burned, livestock killed, seeds for next year's crops were destroyed, salt was ploughed into the ground.

Immediate impact People starved or froze to death - 100 000, many fled.

Long-term impact no further uprisings, 60% of Yorkshire was classed as waste and without livestock in the Domesday Book 20 years later. Reduced chances of Danish invasion - 1071 the Danes chose Ely instead.

Hereward the Wake at Ely - 1070-71

Causes Hereward returned to England to find his lands taken away and his brother killed by the Normans.

Key events He joined rebels attacking Normans with Danish support. They attacked Peterborough Abbey and the Danes took the treasure back to Denmark. Morcar joined Hereward and they decided to capture Ely because it was marshy and easy to defend against Norman attack. The Normans probably bribed monks to show them a safe path and captured Ely. Morcar was imprisoned for the rest of his life and Hereward was never seen again.

Changes in land ownership William controlled England by taking land from disloyal Anglo-Saxons and giving it to loyal Normans. By 1087 less than 5% of the land was owned by Anglo-Saxons. 20% was owned by William and 25% by the Church.

The 4000 A-S thegns had also been a threat (Hereward) - by 1087 their lords had been replaced by Normans and they had to stay loyal to keep their land.

Land was taken by illegal land grabs, by forfeit (making Normans heirs to A-S who had fought against him) and by creating new earldoms (eg Marcher). Later in his reign William reduced the size of earldoms - he wanted to be the most powerful.

How William maintained his royal power

- **Landownership** - even his loyal Normand tenants in chief knew they could lose their land as the king declared ownership of all the land in England - kept them loyal
- **Military strength** skill and ruthlessness, brutality of crushing rebellions intimidated his new country
- **Claim as the legitimate successor** constantly said that Edward had promised him the throne, could say that God chose him to win at Hastings
- **Journeys around the country** to meet important local families and officials, to show himself to gain loyalty
- **Oath taking ceremonies** all men had to swear to serve him loyally

Revolt of the Earls 1075 Causes Roger Earl of Hereford and Ralph Earl of East Anglia were angry that they had less land and power than their fathers. Roger was also angry that William introduced his own sheriffs into his Marcher earlsom. Waltheof, Earl of Northumbria - probably because he was a grumpy A-S

Key events different as Normans rebelled against William and A-S defended him. The three men plotted to split the country between them and hoped for support

from the A-S and Danes. They timed their rebellion for when William was out of the country. The A-S didn't support them, and the Danes arrived too late. Waltheof decided not to rebel and told Lanfranc about the plan. He was captured, imprisoned and executed. Roger was captured and imprisoned for life and Ralph escaped to Brittany and held off an attack by William.

Key topic 3 - Norman England 1066-88

The feudal system (links with landownership) hierarchy - King, tenants in chief, knights and peasants. Each class had land from the king in return for loyalty and military service. Ensured William controlled the whole country., **Tenants in chief** had to provide knights for 40 days **knights service** a year for the King in return for their land - meant the King had an army without having to pay for it. If they rebelled or failed to produce the knights the penalty was **forfeiture** - the king would take it back. When they were granted their land they performed **homage** by kneeling before the king, saying 'I become your man' and swearing on the Bible to be loyal to the King.

Peasants had to perform **labour service** for their lord in return for their land - eg ploughing, sowing and harvesting the lord's crops.

The Church William was very religious - established Battle Abbey to make up for the blood shed at Hastings. Religion was very important in everyday life and owned 25% of the land. Bishops and Abbots were well educated, often acted as advisers in government eg Lanfranc was regent when William left the country. William said the A-S Church was corrupt and bishops and priests were more interested in wealth and people than serving God and the people.

Stigand was the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1066. He broke Church law as he was still collecting the income from his post as Bishop of Winchester, supported a rival to the Pope and had gained his title from Earl Godwin against Edward's wishes. He was accused of simony - selling church positions. He had little control over the other bishops.

Lanfranc replaced Stigand in 1070 because William wanted a Norman in charge.

- He controlled the whole English Church by making the Archbishop of Canterbury the head of the Church in England and held Councils of bishops to discuss and enforce his reforms. Bishops had to pay homage to William - increased his power
- Each bishop had archdeacons to 'police' the priests - checking they were carrying out services in the right way.
- Increased the number of monasteries which followed church rules
- Built huge cathedrals as a reminder of Norman power.
- No new priest could be married

How much did A-S society change under the Normans?

Continuity - life in villages stayed the same - dominated by the farming year and trying to survive disasters of bad harvests and diseases. Most people were still farmers. William used the geld tax. Towns could keep their trading rights and privileges.

Change

- Some slaves were freed
- Feudalism reduced the number of free peasants and made everyone more dependant on their lord.
- Thegns vanished as a class and were replaced by knights owing knight service who were often lords of small manors.
- Earls were replaced by Normans. Less powerful than A-S earls
- Many villages were destroyed in the conquest and after rebellions
- the Normans demanded more taxes than the A-S kings.
- Huge castles and cathedrals were built - many areas of towns were cleared to make room for them.
- Trade with Scandinavia ended and trade with Normandy increased

Norman Government

- **reduced the power of the earls** who had been strong enough to challenge their king under the A-S - use of homage and smaller lands
- **centralised power into his own hands** - the king now owned all the land and used forfeiture as punishment and grants of fiefs as rewards for loyalty. He owned all church land and could appoint bishops. He kept far more land to himself than A-S kings - meant more power and money. Knight service meant that his tenants in chief had soldiers, BUT they owed loyalty to him. The feudal system meant that everyone who used land depended on the king.
- **Regents** were needed as difficult to rule two countries. Odo and FitzOsbern had created resentment and rebellion. Lanfranc dealt with the 1075 but William was quick to return to England. He often left his wife Mathilda in charge of Normandy and stayed in rebellious England
- **The sheriff's role** continued from the A-S shire reeve - collected taxes, oversaw justice and ensured the shire met its military obligations. Some A-S kept their positions at first but were soon replaced by more loyal Normans as some were involved in rebellions against him. (eg Tofi perhaps he had a sticky end). Norman sheriffs could keep a share of the revenue collected, they had to enforce new laws against rebellions and they were important men - tenants in chief or castellans.

- **Demesne** – the land the king kept for himself rather than granting it as a fief. The income paid for his castles and allowed him to show himself as a rich and powerful ruler
- **The forest** William loved hunting and took extra land eg the New Forest. Forest laws were introduced to protect the animals for hunting – it became an offence to take weapons into the forest, hunting dogs were banned, restrictions were made on cutting wood. This made life very difficult for people living in the forest land who needed wood for fuel and building and hunted rabbits and birds for fuel. Caused resentment.
- **The Domesday book** 1086 men were sent out to the shires to find out who owned what land, what taxes they owed the king and whether they could pay more. William now had the power to tax people effectively as they knew how much income everyone had.

The Norman Aristocracy

Culture showed wealth, power and superiority over the English, mainly through buildings such as cathedrals and castles to be bigger and better than what was there before eg William's Tower of London had the largest stone keep in Europe. Showed off wealth by shaving the back of their heads as they had the time to do it unlike common people. They brought the idea of chivalry which idolised the knight and had moral guidelines of how to treat enemies eg William often imprisoned them rather than killing them. Destroyed A-S saints' relics which caused outrage. Poor attitude to the English – going to the toilet was called 'doing an English'.

Language William gave up trying to learn, written English largely disappeared as Latin became the language for writs and church documents. Aristocrats spoke to each other in French.

Bishop Odo – William's half-brother – made Bishop of Bayeux although he had a poor reputation and he often acted as regent for William. He also became Earl of Kent – an important position as the area was likely to be invaded. In 1075 he led an army against the earls. There were lots of complaints against him for illegally seizing land, even church land in Canterbury. In 1082 he was imprisoned by William probably because he was planning to take his knights to Italy and William insisted they were needed in England. He wasn't released until William was on his death bed – shows William's power and ruthlessness – if you started raising your own army you would be punished, regardless of who you were.

William and his sons

Character and personality – tough, determined, ruthless, experienced at war and leadership, greedy. Also religious – felt bad about the Harrying of the North and promoted Church reforms. Devoted to his wife.

Relations with his eldest son Robert nicknamed 'curthose' (dumpy legs) by his father. In the 1070s William didn't think he was ready to take over rule of Normandy - created tension. 1077 his brothers poured water on his head, Robert started a real fight and William had to break them up. Robert was furious that his brothers weren't punished and tried to take a castle. He then fled to France where the King gave him a castle on the borders - Robert launched raids into Normandy from it.

In 1079 they fought each other - Robert knocked him off his horse and gave him his own horse to retreat with - a huge humiliation. 1080 Mathilda organised a reconciliation and Robert was restored as the heir to Normandy Family tension continued though

1087 William died - he said Robert should inherit Normandy but he wanted his favourite son William Rufus to be king of England. Feeling guilty about the violent way he had taken the throne he said God should decide. WR went to England and Lanfranc crowned him king without discussion with the Witan.

Robert wanted to be king as the eldest son inherited all his father's lands. Some Normans would have preferred this as they had land in both countries.

1088 Odo led a rebellion against WR to put Robert on the throne probably because he felt he could control Robert as king. The majority went against the rebels and they were besieged in Pevensey Castle for 6 weeks. Odo then fled to Rochester and hoped Robert would join him from Normandy. He didn't and was forced to surrender. William was established as King of England.